

## DESIGNING AN ILLUSTRATED PREPOSITION QUARTET CARDS FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

### *MERANCANG KARTU QUARTET PREPOSISI BERGAMBAR UNTUK ANAK-ANAK*

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#### **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to develop a product to aid young learners in learning prepositions. It is a learning aid that can be used in both classroom and independent learning activity. The product is a set of game cards that is designed based on renowned quartet cards. This study is classified as Research and Development (R&D). The steps are conducting needs analysis, constructing instructional design, designing the preliminary product, evaluating the preliminary product (expert judgement), and developing the final product. The subjects of this research were Grade 3 learners aged 10-12 years old. The setting was Starting English school in Sleman, Yogyakarta. The data were collected using classroom observation, needs survey, and interviews. The instruments were an observation guideline, questionnaires, and interview guidelines. The data from the needs survey were analyzed quantitatively, and those from the observation and interviews were analyzed qualitatively. The result of this study was a set of illustrated game cards called Finders-Keepers Quartet bundled with the game guide. The game cards consist of 32 cards that are divided into 8 groups of quartets with different themes, illustrations, and captions. The game guide consist of introductions to the game, a procedure to play the game, examples for using the prepositions and dialogue that can be used when playing the game. The results of the data computation of the expert judgement show that the product was categorized as “very good” with the average mean scores ranged from 3.6 to 4.0.

Keywords: *Preposition, Grammar, Game, Card Game, Quartet, Young Learners, Elementary School*

#### **Abstrak**

*Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mengembangkan sebuah produk untuk membantu anak-anak belajar preposisi. Produk tersebut adalah media pembelajaran yang dapat digunakan baik dalam aktivitas belajar di kelas maupun dalam aktivitas belajar secara mandiri. Produk tersebut berupa satu set kartu permainan yang dirancang berdasarkan pada kartu kuartet. Penelitian ini termasuk dalam Research and Development (R&D). Tahapan di dalamnya adalah menganalisa kebutuhan siswa, membuat rancangan panduan, merancang produk awal, mengevaluasi produk awal (expert judgement), dan mengembangkan produk akhir. Subjek penelitian ini adalah anak-anak Kelas 3 berusia 10-12 tahun. Pelaksanaannya bertempat di Starting English school di Sleman, Yogyakarta. Data dalam penelitian ini dikumpulkan melalui pengamatan di kelas, survei kebutuhan, dan wawancara. Sementara itu, instrumen yang digunakan panduan observasi, kuesioner, dan panduan wawancara. Data yang diperoleh dari survei kebutuhan dianalisa secara kuantitatif, sedangkan data yang berasal dari proses pengamatan dan wawancaradiolah secara kualitatif. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah satu set kartu permainan bergambar bernama Finders-Keepers Quartet yang disertai dengan panduan permainan. Kartu permainan tersebut terdiri dari 32 karti yang terbagi menjadi 8 grup kuartet dengan tema, ilustrasi, dan keterangan berbeda. Panduan permainan berisi pengenalan terhadap permainan tersebut, tahap-tahap untuk memainkannya, serta contoh untuk menggunakan preposisi dan dialog ketika memainkan kartu. Perhitungan data dari proses expert judgement menunjukkan bahwa produk tersebut ternilai “sangat bagus” dengan rentang nilai rerata 3.6 sampai 4.0.*

Kata kunci: *Preposisi, grammar, permainan, kartu, Kuartet, anak-anak, Sekolah Dasar*

## INTRODUCTION

Preposition is one of the challenging subjects to teach to children. As a part of English grammar, the subject is important and cannot be tossed about without concern. However, English prepositions have different natures from prepositions in children's first language, Bahasa Indonesia. Such issue becomes an obstacle that cause difficulties in the teaching and learning of English prepositions for children. The difficulties raise as children have just started learning their first language. They have limited experience with language learning and are not well aware of the uses of prepositions in communication. They barely know the concept of language and are not yet capable of developing analytical thinking which is required to learn the prepositions.

It is known that primary level is the crucial age to learn English. As young learners, children will have time spent learning the language more than the time possessed by adults. Brewster et al. (2002:3) stated that, in comparison to high school students, children have better aptitude for understanding and imitating what they hear. Therefore, it is a reasonable act to take benefit of their language learning skills and aptitudes.

Children learn differently from adults. Unlike adults, in order to learn better, children are always in need of assistance and attention from the people around them. An emphasis is put on making them comfortable in the learning process rather than on delivering materials in a larger amount. A set of chosen fun activities are prepared in order to engage them to the language learning. Optimization of learning media takes an important role on those activities. Aside to

engage them to the learning process, it also functions to simplify the complex subject and aid children to understand it better. Therefore, on learning a complex subject such as preposition, the optimization of learning media becomes inevitable.

Prepositions are often taken aside from learners' attention, in the way that they are rarely discussed as frequently as, for example, nouns or verbs in daily classes. Prepositions are regarded as if they are less important words even though they hold irreplaceable roles in sentence. Such condition will influence the children's perception toward prepositions which later will result in their skill of communication. Thus, this occurrence has raised a question for proper media that are able to help children learning preposition.

A good solution is required to overcome the occurring problems on the learning. Using the facts on preposition as a starting point, an attempt is done to create media that are hopefully able to simplify the complex subject and to engage the children in a fun and interesting learning activities. The research conducted was aiming to discover the target and learning needs of young learner in *Starting English* school, and to design a set of quartet cards to aid the learners in learning English preposition.

### English Learning for Young Learners

Young learners are defined as children who learn English in grade school and are generally in the age up to 12 years old (Richards, 2015:221). Elementary school students are categorized as children or young learners. They do not learn the same way as the adult learners do and they find that school learning is difficult.

Brunner (in Brewster, 2002:30) states that it is because children experienced it as very separate thing from that of their real life. They basically show great efforts on learning but lack in understanding and maintaining the information. Thus, the teacher needs to provide a learning method that allows the children to be better in accepting and maintaining the information they perceived.

### **Tasks in English Learning for Young Learners**

Tasks are defined as the learning process that learners will do in the class rather than in the world outside the classroom (Nunan, 2004:2-3). They do not have to involve the production of a language and can be done individually, in pairs, or in groups. Richards (in Nunan, 2004:2) describes that they can be drawing a map while listening to a tape or listening to an instruction and performing a command; it is to make teaching more communicative by practising the language for its own sake.

### **Materials Development for Young Learners**

Language learning materials are defined as anything used by teachers or learners to facilitate the learning of language (Tomlinson, 1998:2). The same idea as Tomlinson's is also stated by Graves (2000:150) as he defines material development as a process of creating, choosing or adapting, and organizing materials and activities that they can help learners achieve their goals in learning. Tomlinson (1998:2) then also explained that the kinds of the language learning materials can be cassettes, videos, pictures, photocopied exercises, work books,

manuals, dictionaries, songs and chants, and the likes.

Appropriate materials are capable of increasing learners' motivation in learning English. However, to be regarded as good, materials are required to be interesting that they can attract learners' involvement and they also need to be clear that they allow both teachers and learners to learn. Therefore, the development of good materials should focus on the learners' needs to ensure their appropriateness to be used in teaching and learning of English.

### **Prepositions as a Part of English Language**

Brown (1984:51) sees a preposition as a word that expresses a relationship between a noun or pronoun and another word in a sentence. The word is classified as a part of speech in English grammar. It is used as the first word in prepositional group, which provides information about place or time or, in more abstract way, about relationships between people or objects. Gatherer (1985:118) classifies prepositions as function words. By "function words" it means that prepositions have little or no clear meaning by themselves but have functions in a sentence.

### **Illustration as an Aid in Language Learning**

Illustration is defined as a decoration, interpretation or visual explanation of a text, concept or process (GNT, 2011). It is designed for integration in published media, such as posters, flyers, magazines, books, teaching materials, animations, video games and films. In language teaching and learning process, illustration is categorized as visual aids or media

that, according to Allen (1983), is defined as an aid that put learners in a situation where they can see what is named by the word to be learned. As visual aids, illustrations, are a great help in stimulating foreign language learning. Illustration can be used as a powerful resource in teaching and learning of English. Illustrations that are created for children usually has friendly and colourful appearance with potential to catch attention and stimulate personal interest.

### **Quartet as a Game in Language Learning**

Quartet as a card game can be an activity that offers entertainment and social enjoyment. Specifically, playing quartet as a language learning activity can help learners memorize better the language they are learning. The contents of a quartet card consists of a colorful picture and its brief description. Den Hertog et al. (2013:2) explains that the colorful pictures are used to attract children's interest. For every card, a brief description is provided for the picture. While waiting for their turn, it is the idea that the children will read these explanations. The class discussions at the end of the game can stimulate the children's thinking.

### **Related Studies**

There were some studies that had been conducted related to the use of quartet cards in language teaching and learning. A study conducted by Setyowati (2010) discovered that quartet game was capable of improving learners' goals in learning simple noun phrase. The result of the research was shown with a series of scores in which learners' average scores climbed from 61.62 to 78.37 by following the implementation

of the game. Another study conducted by Rahayu (2013) also suggested that the card game could help improve learners' vocabulary mastery. The improvement was shown by the results of tests taken by the learners in which their average score raised significantly from 67.93 to 87 after the game was applied.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The research was categorized as Research and Development (R&D). It was conducted to develop a product as learning media for Grade 3 students of *Starting English* school. The product was created as a set of illustrated quartet cards to aid the learning of English prepositions.

The steps were conducting needs analysis, constructing instructional design, designing the preliminary product, evaluating the preliminary product (expert judgement), and developing the final product. The subjects of this research were Grade 3 learners of *Starting English* school aged 10-12 years old. The data were collected using classroom observation, needs survey, and interviews. The instruments were observation guideline, questionnaires, and interview guidelines. The data from the needs survey were analyzed quantitatively, and those from the observation and interviews were analyzed qualitatively.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Target Needs**

Upon learning English, the learners' primary goal was to understand the language so that they could use it in daily communication. Their purpose on learning was supported by their

interest on the subject. It was also strengthened by their awareness about the importance of the language. In terms of necessities, the learners were in needs of learning the contextual use of English, especially the use of prepositions. As described in their wants, the learners wished to do the learning as a game that they could play with their friends. However, besides the mentioned aspects of the needs, the learners had also lacks that were presented as constraints to their learning. They had problems in understanding and memorizing the language that led them to be less confident on using it to communicate. Therefore, to overcome such problems, the learners needed the illustrated prepositions card game as media to aid their learning of English prepositions.

### **The Learning Needs**

The input needed by the learners to learn English prepositions were a colorful game with interesting pictures. The game and the pictures needed were simple enough that they could be easily understood by the learners. Moreover, among the themes offered to them, they preferred the ones about animals, robots, and fairy tales. The procedure preferred by the learners was to learn by playing game. It reflected their newly formed habit of playing the smartphone video games. Beside the video games, they enjoyed playing card game as well but never had really done it in the class except when their teacher brought the bingo game. Such conditions gave this study a benefit that became a good chance to introduce them to a new method of learning.

### **The Product**

Materials used within the product were developed from the course grid which was built up upon the learners' target and learning needs. The materials focused on the topic of prepositions of place and direction, emphasizing on the use of the prepositions in oral communication. They were developed to make the learners enjoy the learning process by engaging them in the game that required every one of them to have dialogues with their friends in order to finish. The materials, input, and activity were developed into a set of game cards that was created using English language that had been adjusted with the learners' level of competence to make sure that they acquire the relevant knowledge and skills as well as to motivate them to learn more about the prepositions and English as the general topic.

Besides the use of simple language, optimizations on the visual aspects of the game also had been done to make it more engaging for the learners. Funny and colorful illustrations of animals and other objects were incorporated to the product design. The use of interesting illustrations within the design was supported by implementation of understandable layout all over the parts of the product. It was designed with a purpose to make the product easier to use for the learners by paying a great attention on their reading flow, the hierarchy of importance of the elements, as well as on the proper use of typography, colors, and size. All of the aspects that had been described were developed into the product that came as a set of cards which was also completed with a piece of game guide

containing procedures, examples, and information regarding the product.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the results of the needs analysis and the product development, it can be concluded that, in learning English prepositions, the learners needed a learning aid that will help them in understanding and memorizing the subject so that they can use it in communication. They wanted the learning process to be enjoyable and the learning aid to be a game that can be played together with their friends. They did not bother if adults were to be present aiding them playing but preferred to interact with them only when they had difficulties. The learners also stated that they rarely played card game in the class, and thus a set of illustrated preposition quartet game cards was designed to answer their problems.

Based on the results of the expert judgement evaluation, the developed product was classified into the “very good” category. The categorization was drawn based on the insight obtained from the expert who gave the product a final score of 3.8. The product was then categorized as appropriate as it had met a set of criteria covering the aspects of materials, input, activity, language as well as content and layout.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Recommendations for Teachers of English for Children**

This product can be used as media for independent learning. It promotes a learning method that is done through the interactive game.

Besides, it may help learners in developing their self-esteem and communication skills and acknowledge that there is a fun way to learn English. Thus, teacher’s attendance is not prohibited at all. Teacher is expected to be present as a guide or helper that is ready to give a hand whenever the learners need them. Besides providing guidance, a teacher is also required to make sure that the learners actively participate in the game as well as to keep them reminded that learning can be done in many ways.

### **2. Recommendations for Parents**

Parents need to keep it in mind that children learn not only at school but anywhere. They will learn from anything that they see, hear, and experience and they will do it both consciously and unconsciously. Therefore, parents need to make sure that the children are exposed to something of positive values. Promoted by the product of this study are activities that provide children with positive value and experience that can be played not limited only in classroom, but also in their leisure time as well.

### **3. Recommendations for Material Developers**

Materials developers could develop the product covering different topics and subjects aiming for different range of age and competency level. They could develop the topic of this study—which is prepositions of place and direction—using different approaches. Besides, it is also suggested that the developers enrich the knowledge and skills required to develop a better product.

#### 4. Recommendations for Other Researchers

Researchers are suggested to sharpen their skills of observation and analysis so that they could be more aware of problems and are capable of finding better solutions. It can be done by implementing the “five whys” technique proposed by Sakichi Toyoda to discover the root of underlying problems (Serrat, 2009). It is also important for researchers to deepen their understanding on the users of the product they are designing for. If the users are learners of certain grades, then they are required to understand them—especially the learners’ way of thinking and behavior upon learning. In addition, it is recommended for researchers to use the support from a digital illustrator or a graphic designer to handle creation process of the research product and to make use of websites that provide free resources—namely some of them, *Eezy*, *Freepik*, and *Flaticon*—as well as platforms that offer useful design softwares for free—such as *Figma*, *Gravit Designer*, and *Canva*.

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